

**REMARKS**

This submission is in response to the Official Action dated November 19, 2003. Reconsideration of the above identified application, in view of the above amendments and the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

**I. Status of the Claims**

Claims 2, 8, 14, 15, 19, and 20 have been amended.

No new matter is added.

Claims 1, 4-7, 9-11, 17, and 18 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter therein.

Claims 2, 3, 8, 12-16, 19, and 20 are presently pending.

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, and 11-15 stand rejected.

Claims 8-10 and 16-20 are objected to.

**II. Acknowledgement of Allowable Subject Matter**

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the acknowledgement of allowable subject matter in claims 8-10 and 16-20. Claims 8-10 and 16-20 have been objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claims, and claims 8, 19, and 20 have been amended to be rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant respectfully requests that the objection be withdrawn. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

**III. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection**

Claims 1-3, 5, and 6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,407,295 to Kuhl in view of U.S. Patent No. 581,476 to Blanton Jr. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,957,477 to Enszt et al. ("Enszt"), U.S. Patent No. 5,320,348 to Starrett, or U.S. Patent No. 4,528,998 to Gamm. Claims 11-15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kuhl in view of Blanton Jr. and further in view of

Ensz, Starrett, or Gamm, as applied above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,003,328 to Gaynor.

Claims 1, 5, 6, and 11 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Hence, the rejection of claims 1, 5, 6, and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) has been rendered moot. Claims 2, 14, and 15 have been amended, and claims 2, 3, and 12-15 depend from allowed claims. Hence, the rejection of claims 2, 3, and 12-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) has also been rendered moot. It is requested that the rejection be withdrawn. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

## CONCLUSION

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Dated: February 18, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

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